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SUBJECT: ELECTION 2007: SOUTHERN PDP WARD CONGRESSES AND PRIMARIES

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶11. (C) Summary: The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has completed the process for choosing candidates to contest the April 2007 State Assembly and Federal House and Senate elections in southern Nigeria. Throughout the south, candidates from established factions supported by the governor generally triumphed over those from opposing factions. In those southern states where the competition was close, violence and serious voting irregularities were also present. By taking a look at two states in each of the three geopolitical zones of southern Nigeria, the following report is a representational sampling of what happened in the PDP primaries. End summary.

¶12. (U) Nigeria's People's Democratic Party (PDP) has nearly completed the process for choosing candidates to contest state and federal assembly as well as gubernatorial elections in the south. The process for choosing candidates for election begins with ward congresses that select delegates, who in turn choose candidates for local government councils. The delegates then select members to attend the state primaries, where candidates for the bicameral National Assembly and unicameral State Assembly are chosen. The first state primary nominated candidates for state assembly races; the second, candidates for the national House of Representatives races; the third, to select the PDP candidates for national Senate races. Primaries were held on successive Saturdays starting in early November and finishing in early December.

Lagos: George in Control

¶13. (U) News media reported allegations of manipulation by PDP leadership. Some members accused People's Democratic Party (PDP) National Deputy Chairman, Bode George, of disqualifying some candidates in favor of his own.

¶14. (U) Lagos held its PDP primary to elect State Assembly delegates on November 18 and Federal House of Representatives on November 25. News media reported two individuals killed in Epe Constituency after supporters of a losing PDP aspirant attacked supporters of the successful PDP candidate. The house of the opposing candidate, Mr. Adeleke Fariu, was attacked and he was reported saying he "narrowly avoided

being lynched."

¶15. (U) News media reported that young hoodlums known as "area boys" were mobilized by politicians to intimidate supporters of opposition candidates in the ward of Apapa Iganmu local government. Business and commerce came to a halt when two factions of area boys fought over the spoils of their activities.

Ekiti: Failed Impeachment Fallout

¶16. (U) The Ekiti PDP banished state assembly members who supported the ouster of Governor Ayo Fayose. None of the 23 members who supported impeachment won renomination. This included State Assembly Speaker Friday Aderemi, who claimed the governorship after Fayose and Deputy Governor Biodun Olujimi were impeached.

¶17. (U) Violence occurred on November 18 when the police opened fire on disgruntled PDP members who barricaded the entrance to a ward congress venue. News media also reported violence during the federal Senate primaries on December 3. Chairman of the Ekiti State PDP, Chief Ropo Adesanya, two gubernatorial aspirants and a member of the National Assembly were said to have been attacked by "hired assassins." No clear winners were announced in the Senate races and the top two contestants in each will face a run-off election.

Oyo: Adedibu's Candidates Dominate

¶18. (C) Referring to the PDP ward congresses and primaries in Oyo, traditional ruler and Consulate contact Prince Gbola Adesiyan complained to Poloff that Oyo State godfather Lamidi Adedibu allowed only his acolytes to be nominated. All 18 of

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the legislators who supported the ouster of Oyo State Governor Rashidi Ladoja won renomination.

¶19. (U) In the House of Representatives primaries held November 25-26, one person died and scores were injured in a fracas at the Igboho More Grammar School, news media reported. The grammar school was the venue to determine the PDP candidates for Senate from the Irepo/Orelope/Olounsgo Federal Constituency. The Ibadan North Federal Constituency was characterized by massive electoral rigging, news reports said. Delegates gathered outside the polling place in an alleged attempt to scare away party officials so that they could fix the outcome. Media reported that the delegates were armed with rifles and shots were fired into the air.

¶10. (U) The media reported "massive irregularities" in the PDP primaries for the National Assembly Senate as some delegates were attacked by "hoodlums." "Irregularities and protest" were reported in Oyo North and Oyo Central Senate districts. Some of the local councils announced that the election had been rigged and ballot boxes stuffed by PDP council chairmen. However, news media reported peaceful elections in the Oyo South Senatorial District.

Abia: Relative Quiet

¶11. (U) The departure of most of Governor Orji Kalu's supporters from the PDP to the newly formed Progressive People's Party (PPA) allowed the PDP's Abia primaries to take place with little public rancor, although the state assembly primaries were postponed for one day. Controversy did erupt when the PDP denied former Deputy Governor Enyinnaya Abaribe the nomination for a Senate bid. This may have been to punish him for resigning his post and switching to the

All-Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) to run against Kalu for Governor in 2003.

Enugu: Ebeano Flexes its Power

¶12. (U) Enugu saw an intraparty struggle for control of the state PDP between the Ebeano faction led by Governor Chimaroke Nnamani, and the so-called "authentic PDP" faction led by National Assembly Senate President Ken Nnamani (no relation). Ebeano, loosely translated from Igbo meaning "Where we are", emerged victorious as the Ken Nnamani-led faction largely boycotted the primaries. Governor Nnamani, after briefly testing the presidential waters, won the PDP nomination for Ken Nnamani's Enugu East senatorial district. Enugu North Senator Fidelis Okoro, who introduced a resolution asking the EFCC to issue its report on Governor Nnamani's alleged corrupt activities, lost his bid for renomination.

Edo: Anenih Faction Triumphant

¶13. (C) Results of the Edo State primaries reveal candidates aligned with Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees Tony Anenih-led faction uniformly victorious over candidates favored by Governor Lucky Igbinedion. Igbinedion reportedly boycotted the state primaries after being active in the ward congresses. When Poloff on December 1 asked Edo State First Lady Eki Igbinedion about her future activities, the First Lady grimaced and remarked wryly, "We will see what happens in 2007."

¶14. (U) News media reported Speaker of Edo State House of Assembly Friday Itulah and House Leader Patrick Obahiagon were among members of the State Assembly to emerge victorious in the November 25-26 House of Representatives PDP primaries. Also successful were Deputy Leader of the House, Peter Ekhator and House member Samson Osagie. News media reported no irregularities.

¶15. (C) PDP primaries for National Assembly nominees were postponed from December 2 to December 5. Edo State National Union of Journalists Chair Michael Otunba told Poloff PDP leaders needed more time to "manipulate" opposing PDP members to support their preferred candidates.

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Rivers: Irregularities and Inconclusive Results

¶16. (U) Polling irregularities and inconclusive House of Assembly primaries throughout Rivers State November 18 were reported in the media. Over seven people were reportedly killed due to "electoral violence," some caused by youths countering corruption attempts, some reportedly at the behest of politicians. Election results were only declared in 12 out of 23 council areas. State Assembly Deputy Speaker Tonye Harry is set to return to the House for a third term. A contact told Poloff he witnessed blatant rigging - removal of unfavorable ballots - at his local area polling station.

Bayelsa: Secretariat Explosion; Primaries Postponed

¶17. (U) On November 25 an explosion at the Bayelsa State PDP Secretariat damaged the two-story building. Security sources

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report no lives were lost in the blast. A Bayelsa State

Government interlocutor told Poloff disenchanted youth were most likely responsible for the blast.

¶18. (U) By Presidential Directive, party primaries in Bayelsa's five federal constituencies have not yet taken place. The directive was meant to allow them to harmonize the three lists submitted to the PDP National Secretariat by the three leading gubernatorial aspirants, incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) Chairman Timi Alaibe, and Timipre Sylva. The National Secretariat gave no indication as to when the primaries would resume.

¶19. (C) Comment: We can divide the PDP primaries into two groups. The first group, consisting of the states of Lagos, Abia, Enugu, and Edo, had a well-established faction in control of the PDP and experienced very little violence as the dominant faction saw its candidates victorious. In the "winner take all" PDP primaries, often when a faction senses it is losing it will end up simply boycotting the primary, giving the majority faction an even better chance to dominate the process. In the second group of Rivers, Bayelsa, Ekiti, and Oyo, widespread voting infractions were featured. These states also saw the most violence. End comment.

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